



Joint Council for  
Qualifications<sup>CIC</sup>

# Frequently Asked Questions (for Examination Centres)

Advance Information for General Qualifications

Summer 2022

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# 1. Introduction

This document covers frequently asked questions on advance information. For further details on advance information please also see the JCQ *Advance Information for Ofqual Regulated General Qualifications, Summer 2022*

(<https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Advance-Information-for-General-Qualifications-2021-22.pdf>).

## 2. Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is the purpose of advance information

Advance information is intended to communicate, ahead of the examinations, the focus of the content of the examinations (or part of the examinations) that will be assessed in the examination papers. As stated by DfE, the purpose of advance information is to support revision.

### 2. Where will I get the advance information from?

All awarding organisations will make advance information publicly available on their websites.

**Note:** Advance information will only be available from your awarding organisation's website. It will not be available from any other source.

### 3. Will private candidates be able to see the advance information at the same time as schools and colleges?

Yes, it is important that everyone preparing for summer 2022 examinations has access to the advance information to aid revision. All awarding organisations will make advance information publicly available on their websites at the same time for schools, colleges and private candidates/tutors.

### 4. Why won't all advance information look the same for each awarding organisation or subject?

The nature of the different specifications and assessments mean different approaches need to be taken (for instance comparing a very content heavy, practical, subject such as science with a subject based on set texts such as English – the best advance information solution for these subjects would be very different). Also, variations between specifications for the same subject across awarding organisations means that the best advance information solution can be different even within the same subject. The following principles have been applied:

- We have avoided providing so much detail that answers to likely questions could be pre-prepared and memorised.
- We have made sure advance information does not:
  - undermine the value of the qualification in supporting student progression,
  - directly provide answers to other, potentially low tariff (mark), questions,
  - compromise the capability of the examinations to sufficiently differentiate between students' performances.

As a consequence of the agreed principles for advance information it will not always be possible to detail everything that is in the examination. In some cases this would risk undermining good education, progression, or fair results; in others it would be unhelpful to teachers and students, for example by listing topics that could lead to excessive teaching or revision on areas that are worth few marks. **This means that in some subjects for instance the advance information will not apply to certain papers or parts of papers.**

### 5. Why will my subject not have advance information?

The exceptions are either because of the nature of assessments in those subjects (assessment is by NEA in Art and Design qualifications) or because, following consultation by DfE and Ofqual, it has been decided that advance information will not be provided in subjects where optionality is being introduced for 2022.

**This applies to GCSE English Literature, History, Ancient History and Geography.**

### 6. What about the November examinations for GCSE English language and GCSE mathematics during the autumn term 2022, will they have advance information?

To ensure fairness to students sitting examinations in autumn 2022, new advance information (specific to the November examinations) will be provided for GCSE English language and GCSE mathematics in July 2022.

## **7. What are synoptic questions?**

Synoptic questions allow students to demonstrate their ability to draw together different areas of knowledge, skills and/or understanding from across a full course of study for a qualification. Students will need to have covered all the specification content to ensure they are best placed to demonstrate what they know and can do in synoptic questions.

## **8. What do you mean by 'low and high tariff' questions?**

This will vary between different specifications but tariff refers to the number of marks allocated to a given question.

## **9. Why is the advance information mainly being applied to higher tariff questions?**

While some advance information for some specifications relate mostly to higher tariff questions, this is not the case for all advance information. The nature of different specifications and assessments mean different approaches need to be taken.

Low tariff questions are targeted at students across the ability range, and high tariff questions are also designed to differentiate students across the ability range. Mark schemes are developed specifically to reward candidates across the ability range.

Advance information has been designed to help all students as much as possible and its purpose is to help guide and prioritise revision. As low tariff questions tend to cover a large proportion of specification content, if advance information was provided for low tariff questions, it would make advance information less useful for all students, including lower ability students, because it would cover a much wider area of the specifications and be less helpful in guiding them.

The best preparation for students' future progression is to cover the full content of the specification, and to use advance information to help guide and prioritise students' revision.

## **10. What is the value of advance information if the advice remains that the full content of the specification should be covered?**

Advance information has not been designed to identify aspects of specification content that need not be covered during the course. It is intended to help guide and prioritise revision. GCSE and GCE assessments sample specification content each year. In a normal exams series, students and teachers do not know which aspects of specification content will feature in any of the assessments. Advance information supports revision by communicating, ahead of the examinations, the focus of the assessments in 2022. We trust this will provide reassurance to students as they prepare for their exams.

## **11. Why can't students bring advance information into the examination if they've been using it to revise?**

Advance information, if provided in the examination itself, could provide students with prompts to questions. This in turn could lead to unfair results and damage progression. (It should be noted however, that students will be permitted to use examination aids in GCSE mathematics, physics and combined science examinations in 2022). Bringing advance information into the examination could also distract students from giving best attention to the questions in the examination, particularly in combination with the allowed examination aids.

## **12. If students haven't finished the course, can they just focus on what's included in the advance information?**

To support progression, and students' best possible performance in the examinations, they will want to revise the whole of the course but advance information will help highlight where to focus more specific revision. Some questions in the examinations, for example synoptic questions, will require knowledge beyond what is included in advance information. It is important to note that the advance information will not cover everything that is to be assessed. In many cases the advance information will provide listed topics of specification content (in specification order not in question paper order) that will be the main focus of assessment, but content that is not listed could still be assessed. It is important therefore to ensure students have a good understanding of all the specification content.

### 13. Why are you not releasing the advance information until 7 February 2022?

Advance information will be provided to support revision for the summer 2022 examinations. The Government's position is that the best time for advance information to be available to support revision is 7 February 2022.

### 14. Will there be advance information for summer 2023?

The current advance information approach only applies to the summer 2022 examinations to help mitigate for the level of disruption to teaching and learning as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Further advice and support

We have worked hard to ensure the advance information is as clear as possible. However, if you are unsure or have any questions about the advance information when it is released, please contact the relevant awarding organisation as follows:

- **AQA:** <https://www.aqa.org.uk/contact-us>
- **OCR:** <https://www.ocr.org.uk>
- **Pearson:** <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/contact-us.html>
- **WJEC Eduqas:** [info@eduqas.co.uk](mailto:info@eduqas.co.uk)

Advance information is not applicable to qualifications regulated by CCEA. Please refer to <https://ccea.org.uk/>.

For details about adaptations, including some advance information, for Qualifications Wales-approved GCSEs and GCEs, please refer to [www.wjec.co.uk](http://www.wjec.co.uk).